



Change in LIPITOR and how New Generics can save you Money

LANS along with Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM) would like to share some good news with you. It's about a prescription drug you may be taking.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a generic equivalent for the brand-name drug, Lipitor®. This new generic is called atorvastatin. It will become available in November 2011.

It works the same, and it costs less. For you, this can mean a lower-cost prescription with the same results. You may want to consider this new option if you are currently taking LIPITOR. If your prescription is written as do not substitute, you will need to contact your retail pharmacy, Primemail or your physician so you can receive the generic equivalent drug, atorvastatin.

In January 2012, Lipitor moves to third tier (non-preferred brand-name drugs). In early 2012, if you continue to take Lipitor when a generic equivalent drug (atorvastatin) is available you will pay an additional \$15 for each 30-day supply and an additional \$30 for a 90-day supply for your non formulary copay. This additional amount will not apply to your prescription drug deductible or out-of-pocket limit.

***Please call your pharmacist and ask for atorvastatin.
You will pay less with the generic equivalent atorvastatin. You will pay more with
Lipitor.***

A generic equivalent drug has the same active ingredients and is shown to work the same way in the body as the brand-name drug. The FDA has determined that atorvastatin is the same as Lipitor® in dosage, performance, safety, strength, quality and use. Generic drugs typically cost less than brand-name drugs, and must meet the same rigid standards set by the FDA.

List of statin drugs on your formulary that treat high cholesterol after Jan 1, 2012

| <i>First tier</i> | <i>Second tier</i> | <i>Third tier</i> |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Generic Drugs \$</i> | <i>Preferred Brands \$\$</i> | <i>Non-Preferred Brands \$\$\$\$</i> |
| <i>atorvastatin, simvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin</i> | Crestor® [Lipitor moved to third tier (Non-preferred brand-name drugs) in 2012] | Lipitor®, Vytarin®, Advicor®, Altoprev®, Lescol®, Lescol® XL, Mevacor®, Pravachol®, Simcor®, Zocor®, Livalo® |

Your health is important to us. Be sure to follow your doctor's and pharmacist's instructions when taking your medication. Also included with this letter are some FAQs about generics. Other good resources about generics include your pharmacist and doctor. If you have questions about your pharmacy benefit, please call 1-877-878-5265.

Remember: Treatment decisions are *always* between you and your doctor. Coverage is always subject to the exclusions and limitations noted in your benefit plan booklet. See your benefit booklet for details.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a generic drug? A generic drug is a copy of its brand-name counterpart. Both formulations use the same active ingredients. Generic drugs work the same as their brand-name counterparts, and they may cost up to 80 percent less.

Are generic drugs as good as brand-name drugs? Yes. Brand-name and generic drugs sold in the United States are approved and regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). When the FDA approves a generic drug, this means it has determined the generic drug is the same as its brand-name counterpart in dosage, performance, safety, strength, quality and usage. There are often two generic drug options:

- A **generic equivalent** has the same active ingredients as its brand-name counterpart. Many pharmacies make this substitution automatically, according to your benefit design.
- A **generic therapeutic alternative** is similar in clinical effect to a brand-name drug in the same drug class. While both drugs treat the same condition, they have different active ingredients. If your doctor decides a generic drug is appropriate, the generic can save money by treating the same condition and providing proven effective clinical results.

What if the drug I am taking is not available as a generic? Some drugs are only available as a brand name. But in many cases, there are generic drugs that act in the same or similar way as the brand-name drug you are taking.

How do I find out if I can take one of these generic drugs instead of the brand-name drug I am taking now? Talk with your doctor. He or she will be familiar with the different drugs and your medical condition. Your doctor can decide if a generic drug is right for you. Ask your doctor if a generic drug can be safely used instead of your current brand-name drug. If he or she writes a new prescription for a generic drug, you may begin saving money immediately when you fill this prescription at a participating plan pharmacy.

Why do generic drugs look different than brand-name drugs? A generic drug might be a different color, size or shape than a brand-name drug. The FDA requires that the active ingredients in a generic drug be the same as in the brand-name drug. However, inactive ingredients – such as coloring agents and flavor – may differ.

Why do generic drugs cost less? When the patent expires on a brand-name drug, other companies may begin making and selling the drug under its generic name. Manufacturers spend years and millions of dollars researching a new brand-name drug and bringing it to market. A generic drug does not have these expenses.

If it's just a small copay difference, why should I change? Many people must take certain drugs regularly for the rest of their lives to help preserve health. So the cost savings between a generic drug and a brand-name drug – even just a copay – can really add up over time. You may not know how much the drugs you take actually cost. Generic drugs can cost between 30 percent and 80 percent less than brand-name drugs. Choosing generic drugs can help control rising health care costs.

For more information, go to:

For more information on generics, and to compare brand-name and generic drug prices, log onto www.MyPrime.com.

You can also log on to www.TotalHealthKnowledge.com to view a free interactive module:

Username: Generics

Password: Prime

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/default.htm>